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FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY INTERESTS
American Legion National Security Commission,
Washington, January 26, 1950

I

Foreign policy has new relationship to national security. In old days function of foreign policy was to protect U.S. trade. National defense establishment--beside handling such problems as we had on this continent--was to maintain some coastal defense guns to shoot enemies if they came, etc. Today this has changed. National security as much a matter of foreign policy as of defense establishment.

II

Why is this so? In past national security rested on (1) favorably geographic situation; (2) absence of any really impassioned enemy; and (3) balance among other world powers.

In these circumstances, we didn't have to maintain serious establishment or work very hard diplomatically to avoid wars. Today we do--for many reasons--with many of which you are familiar. Am not going to repeat them all. But most important one is that war itself, i.e. military action alone has lost its former significance as an assurer of national security.

War

War today among great powers means great deterioration and trouble. It can settle only one of two questions: Who survives? Who suffers worst catastrophe? Look at last two wars.

III

What, then, is function of foreign policy with relation to national defense?

(a) To keep war from coming. This cannot be done by diplomacy alone. You must maintain armed strength and be able to operate with shadow of that strength as policeman operates with his side arms.

(b) To see that if it comes, we are in best position to come out of it militarily favorably; that we have friends and allies where need them; that enemy does not, etc. strategic materials, etc.

(c) To see that in wake of war, damage caused to our world is as little as possible; that war does not end in ways which leave us vulnerable to new dangers.

IV

There is no foreign policy today separable from defense policy--no defense policy separable from foreign policy. There is only national policy. We are all in this boat together.